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AN IDYLL OF A DREAM.

LEON EDWARD CRAIG.

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Respectfully Dedicated to Miss Mamie Gertrude Morris, Chattanooga, Tenn.

LAST night I lay sleeping
There came a dream so fair.
'Twas a dream I long will cherish
Because it taught Faith's needed lesson,
And showed me plains of peace.
In this dream, at first, I seemed to see
A dark and dismal past.

Clouds darkened every horizon
And gloom cast shadows everywhere.
Long trains of ills and disappointments
Passed by, unheeded, dumb.
First a cloud, then a sunbeam,
Until finally it seemed to be an endless
Scene of desolation.
Every moral faculty,
Every hope and faith inspiring trait
Seemed sunk in helpless imbecility.
The first among the long train of ills
Was, many disappointments.
Hopes, me thought, were only to be
crushed
By cruel and relentless hands.
Then followed temptations, of every
kind, on every hand.
"Depart, Tempter, depart,"
I would command, again and again.
One conflict ended only to witness
Another one, mightier and stronger
Childhood's happy, blissful dreams
Were as but a hollow mockery.
I heard no "Sweet voices of the night,"
I heard no children singing.
There were no anthems of joyous hal-
lujahs,
No mighty offertories, swelling the
measure of human joy.
Instead, I only seemed to hear,
Through my mind's and memory's ach-
ing ears,
Tones of dirges, and sounds of silent
sobbing.
I passed down the city's streets, which
were dark and cold,
Until I came to an open cathedral door.
Why, or how, I do not know,
But I entered its massive portals
And sought a secluded seat in the rear of
its spacious auditorium.
The organ, bold, grand and majestic,
Was pealing forth the prelude,
"Rejoice, rejoice all ye people."
The tones died away, like a great
Swelling echo of a grand Amen.
Me thought the music would cease,
And I closed my eyes in a silent reverie.
In a moment there came floating through
the room
The sound of a sweet and lyric voice.
"I will not forsake thee!"
Were the words that reached my ears.
At once my attention was won.
"Who can it be?" I asked myself,
"Of whom this singer sings?"
"Rest, rest, to the weary!"
"Peace, peace to the soul."
Though life may be dreary, earth is
not thy goal.
Come lay down thy burden,
Come unto me,
I will not forsake thee,
Though all else should flee."

I sat and listened, as one
Enthroned in mingled doubt and fear.
In an instant another sound came peal-
ing forth from the organ
And in unison a mighty chorus was
sung.
"Jubilate Deo" rang out in tones
Almost divine.
In majestic maestrosos, in sweet lulling
and antiphons,
Praises were sung.
It was grand, but a torture.
Soon I was out upon the street,
And back to my habitation.
Living doubts, fears and sorrows,
Were soon changed to dreams.
While thus I slept and dreamt, me
thought,
Some sweet spirit came and whispered
in my ear.
"Awake, Thou who sleepest,
Arise come go with me,
And I will show thee plains of peace.
There is joy, there is joy,
Come, come, and go with me."
With much distrust and many doubts,
I followed the spirit on.
We passed over broad and fertile fields,
Filled with rich and growing grain.
We traversed through valleys,
Over mighty towering hills,
To broad and massive plains beyond.
Their boundary was mountains.
We wandered on and on
For leagues and miles.
At last we came to a woodland forest.
And then the spirit came and walked
by my side.
Presently, we came to a lake of calm
and placid blue.
At the base of a tall and rugged bluff.
We wound our way, down, up, and
around
Its borders.
The farther we went, the more beautiful
The way, the scenes and the journey
became.
A sweet subtle fragrance filled the air.
At last, we reached the summit,
And then the spirit said to me:
"Stop, I pray thee, and listen to me,
Be thou of good cheer,
Follow me, and do as I bid thee.
Soon we will be at our journey's end."
We followed a broad and pretty path,
To the edge of the woodland, and then,
I saw a scene of exquisite beauty.
The spirit led me to a large and stately
ground
Where we entered in.
On and on we walked,
Through gardens of rarest flowers and
sparkling fountains.
The fragrance I had noticed before,
was incomparable
To that which I now perceived.
The spirit stooped and plucked a rose of
Deep and purest red, which he gave to
me.
At last we came to a cool and pretty
nook.
We both sat down upon a rustic sum-
mer seat,
And then this spirit said to me:
"Within this cottage which you see in
yonder garden,

There lives a maid, one whose life,
whose heart and mind,
Make one splendid scroll of spotless
purity.
Thou hast an ideal which long thou hast
sought,
And if thou doest as I bid thee do,
This twilight shall be thy life's radiant
morn.
Soon, I shall leave thee, but before I go
With this wand of mine, I shall strike
this rock.
At that moment the maid shall appear.
When first you see her, I bid thee arise,
Go to her and offer this rose of red
which I have given thee.
If she shall then give you a rose of spot-
less white,
It shall be as a token of love's holy
night
And assurance to you.
I bid thee, 'Be of good cheer,'
As spake the prophets of old,
For lo, I am with thee, and will give
thee aid.
Be not afraid.
In doing as I bade thee thou hast proven
Perfect faith.
Be thou faithful unto death."
Before I could realize it, the spirit
smote the rock,
And then was gone.
Instinctively, I looked toward the cot-
tage, and my eyes beheld,
Such a maid as the spirit described.
I had expected to be dazzled, to be daz-
ed by her beauty,
But I was not.
I advanced to meet her, as the spirit
had directed me to do,
And I offered her the rose of red.
She put her hand to her bosom,
Loosened a rose of pure and fragrant
white
And gave it to me.
I led her to a seat, where, with the
spirit I had sat.
At first I was pleased, but that was all.
She was both sweet and beautiful.
Her ways were pleasantness and her
paths were peace.
The longer I remained in her presence
The more I discovered, the more I ad-
mired and esteemed her.
At last the day ended. Others came
and went.
Each day I was with her, saw her, and
learned her better.
Now, I began to see that all the sor-
rows of the past,
All the disappointments I had suffered
Now served to teach me a better and
higher appreciation
Of this lady fair.
The sunshine of peace and happiness
Dispelled every hanging cloud of gloom.
I now heard "sweet voices of the night"
And "children sweetly singing"
Hosannas and hallelujahs.
There was sunshine and music in my
soul.
What wondrous transformation,
Night was gone.
The "Radiant morn had dawned at
last."
What tongue can describe,
What pen depict,
What brush portray,
What words can tell,
The joy of the heart,
Filled with immaculate and unselfish
love?
Me thought I saw this love grow to its
full fruition,
Winning for me a commensurate re-
ward,
The treasure I sought.
One magnificent evening, this fair lady
and I
Were sitting on the same rustic seat
Where my fairy spirit had led me be-
fore.
I told her of my love, in simple and
truthful vein,
And asked her to crown a true heart's
appeal and devotion,
With the diadem of her own spotless
love.
I know not what ensued.
Human existence seemed to cease, and
in its place there came
Joy supreme, and life divine.
As to her answer and how it was given,
All I can remember is this:
I felt the touch of a soft white hand,
And a head crowned with queenly
tresses
Resting on my shoulder.
I heard her speak,
In accents soft and low,
And knew that she was mine.
Such dazzling brightness I had never
seen.
Such swelling joy and pride I had never
known.
In an instant I heard a sound
Which came floating out upon the even-
ing air
From a near-by chapel window.
'Twas the sound of an organ
The notes of a sacred offertory.
Every note, every sound from this
"King of instruments"
Touched a responsive chord in my own
heart.
Which sang an endless "Hallelujah"
A-men.
Time seemed linked to the golden shores
of eternity.
And life was happiness, love, and peace.
As the notes of the organ died away,
We bowed our heads in silent prayer.
The Angelus was ringing.
The prayers were for Heaven's Omni-
potent protection
And God's holy care of a love we cher-
ished.
Sunlight is now streaming into my
room.
Suddenly I awoke.
Yes, it was but a dream,
"An Idyll of a Dream."
But, the dream is a picture, a revela-
tion and an inspiration.
I prize this dream, and will cherish its
memory,
Because, the lady fair, the ideal of the
dream,
Was no other—than you.

LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS.

LULA GATES KNABE.

TWO days before Christmas—a
long long time to Rob and
Hal. Two days—how would
they ever live through them.
And yet, eager as they were for the
time to come, they were depressed by
the fear that perhaps after all they
might not be ready for the coming of
dear old Saint Nick on Christmas eve.
And then they were afraid, too, that
despite the numberless letters that had
been written and dispatched to Santa
Claus through the medium of the fire-
place and smoke, that he would forget
some of the things. And surely if he
should bring all of the things that had
been written for, in Sanscrit I suppose
for only Santa Claus could possibly
read it he would certainly have nothing
left to take to the other little ones, just
as eager and anxious for the coming of
Santa as Rob and Hal.
If they could only see him "des a
minute," Hal said. If they could only
present to him their own version of
certain things which had occurred dur-
ing the past four months. Their little
minds could not remember their short-
comings very far back—but they had
an uncomfortable recollection of some
things that might be laid up against
them, and they felt sure if they could
see him just a minute, they could per-
suade the dear old saint to arrange mat-
ters at their home very differently from
what they feared might otherwise be
the case. For they had been told that
Santa Claus only comes to good children
and try as hard as they would their falls
from grace were very, very frequent.
Every night for weeks mamma had had
to tell them tales of Christmas, and one
in particular of a little boy who had
been permitted to see Santa Claus and
take a ride with him in his sleigh had
taken their fancy more than any other,
and they wondered why they couldn't
have the same privilege accorded to them.
But consult together as they might,
they could not quite see how the inter-
view was to be managed. But, in the
happy thought. Why not write to him
and send it by the real postman. Rob
had recently started to school and could
print beautifully. So all the next day
they were busy as little bees. At twi-
light two weary little figures stole soft-
ly out through the front door and out
the gate unnoticed. Whist as mice,
they ran down the street through the
chilly air, bareheaded and cloakless.
Something was squeezed very tight in
Hal's chubby hand. He insisted that to
him belonged the honor of mailing the
precious epistle. Rob could write it,
since he couldn't; but he must mail it.
When they reached the box, Rob lifted
Hal high in his arms and after much
fumbling, Hal pushed the letter inside
and proudly boasted: "Dere Rob, I did
mail, Oo said I couldn't."
"Yes, you did," said Rob, "and that
was a mighty smart little boy;" but
generously refrained from telling him
how near he came to breaking his back
in the process.
There was not much time for talking,
for now since the deed was done the
children realized that it was very cold
and also nearly dark—catching each
other's hands they scampered home as
fast as they could. As they stumbled
up the steps, Martha the cook, caught
them, "You naughty little children,"
she said; "where have you been out in
this cold? I shall tell your mamma."
"Oh, no, please don't!" they pleaded;
"we are not going out any more."
Martha looked at them a few minutes,
and they looked so innocent eager and
childish in their pleading that she
promised never, never to tell and also
made up her mind to bake them twice
as many little animal cookies for Christ-
mas as she had intended to do.
Oh, dear, how excited they were that
night. How they laughed and talked
to each other in undertones after they
had been put in their little bed. But
finally they went to sleep, and what
dreams of Santa Claus and a world filled
with sweetmeats they had. No work,
but plenty of fun and thousands of pret-
ty things to play with and places to play
in. And then this lovely dream world
faded away and the morning came.
The children awoke feeling as if some-
thing strange had happened. And there
had. Through the night the snow had
fallen softly but steadily, until now it
was a beautiful fluffy white world which
the children looked upon. How daz-
zling it looked, sparkling like diamonds
with the sun shining upon it. How
they clapped their hands and shouted,
thinking of sleds and snowballs. For
what child, especially a boy, is insensi-
ble to the charms of sleds and snowballs.
Mrs. Clarke, had some shopping to do
down town that day. So putting on her

was, as she started. As she came to the
post-box on the corner, the postman was
there on his first round. He held in
his hand a much crumpled very dirty
letter at which he was smiling broadly.
As he saw Mrs. C. he held up the letter
and laughed outright, "just look here,"
he said, and when Mrs. C. looked she
laughed also. The letter was address-
ed to "Mister Santy Klawz, Knoxvil,
Amerika."
"I wonder what little chicks wrote
that," said Mrs. Clarke, and if it will
ever reach its destination." Then sud-
denly it dawned upon her that the
printing was very familiar to her. "Mr.
Black I do believe my little midgets
did that. It looks just like Rob's print-
ing and spelling and they were still as
mice all day yesterday. Do open it and
see."
He opened it and glanced at the sig-
nature. "You are right," he said.
Mrs. Clarke took the letter and read it,
then passed it over to the postman who
read it and then laughed until he almost
clipped. Rob had at first made an effort
to consult his spelling book but had soon
given that up as entirely too much to
expect of any one. There were blots
and blurs and ugly scratches as well as
rubblings out and dirty thumb marks,
but that was the best they could do, so
they had sent it as it was, trusting that
Santa Claus could read it.
As soon as Mrs. Clark recovered
from the surprise, she went on, turn-
ing some blocks out of her way to go
by her husband's office. After the
precious epistle was read again they
held a brief consultation, which appar-
ently was very satisfactory. Mrs.
Clark went out smiling, and her hus-
band's eyes twinkled as he looked after
her.
How long the day was! The little
ones thought it never would end. They
were sure the longest day of the year
came the day before Christmas instead
of June. They were surely going to
stay awake all night to see Santa Claus
come, and see him if possible. But af-
ter the stockings were hung up and the
prayers said in which Hal had
helped to be sure and send Santa
Claus, and mama for the hundred thou-
sand time, had told them everything
she ever knew of Christmas, tired na-
ture asserted herself, and the children
were off to sleep again in the fairyland
of childhood's dreams, and they knew
nothing more until they heard papa
dressing in the morning.
Hal rubbed his eyes and shouted "pa-
pa may I det up, where is my tocking?"
and out of bed he bounced, with Rob
right behind him, both shouting and
dancing like little wild Indians. There
were the stockings, too, full to the top,
and by the hearth they found the
abundant evidence of Santa's generosity
which could not go in the stockings.
There was the tool-chest full of tools,
for which Rob had longed for months,
and the wagons, and balls, and marbles,
and the rocking-horse, almost a
real horse, it looked so natural, which
was immediately appropriated by Hal
and put to use; and the drums, and
sleds, and candles, and sweetmeats of
all sorts. My! did children ever get so
many things before. While they were
being dressed Rob heard a whine out
in the hall and rushing to the door, he
opened it and there was the cutest little
black dog, and something tied around
his neck which proved to be a letter.
Papa took it and read the big bold
letters on it, which said, For Masters
Rob and Hal Clarke. Opening it he
read:
Iceville, Isle of Santa Claus,
Dec. 25th, 1899.
Dear Children: Your letter was re-
ceived. I was so glad to get it, for it is
not often the little folks write to me for
pretty things I carry. I should have
gone to see you anyhow, for I never
have missed you, but I might not have
remembered all of the things if I had
not had your letter to remind me. I am
sorry some of the things you asked for,
I could not leave, for even Santa Claus
can't do everything. The Kangaroo
would not go down the chimney, and
the porcupine and gorilla would cer-
tainly have made trouble before you
learned their habits. I am sorry your
dog was killed last Summer, so I send
you this one to take the place of it.
Good-bye and be good boys.
Your Friend,
SANTA CLAUS.
Oh, what a good Santa Claus, and what
a good Christmas they had! All the
morning they played and in the after-
noon they went with mamma to visit a
poor family, and took with them a bas-
ket of good things, for they remem-
bered that there are others in this
great world who were not so abundantly
remembered by Santa Claus as they
had been. And when the day was
done, tired little mortals as they were,
they thought there had never been such
a good Christmas before.

A CHRISTMAS GERMAN.

HARRIS DICKSON.

THE balancing lines of the german
Are waving forward and back.
The one in a riot of color,
The other in soberest black;
Light, light as the wind-driven thistle,
I see a dear, trim little maid,
And God's holy lilies were never
More daintily, purely arrayed.
I catch but a glimpse of her garments
In the rush and the flow of the press,
A flutter of spray that is tossing
As foam on the undulant crest.
Ah, the violin, surging, triumphant,
Singeth clear, of the Infinite Sea,
And I know that the ebb of the silence
Will drift her back gently to me.
So distant she seems, so elusive,
So spotless in billows of white,
I marvel that this is the lassie
Who'll bid me so sweet a "good night."
So sweet a good night at the mantel—
Her haughty head droopeth to rest
A tiny wee bit on my shoulder,
Her trust and her love to express.
Whatever else Thou hast denied me,
Whatever of fortune I miss,
With reverent heart I adore Thee,
Oh, Bountiful Father, for this.
Vicksburg, Miss., December, 1899.

MISTAKES.

Reconcile yourself (if you are to re-
main in this world at all) to the condi-
tions of your being; do not vex your-
self and break your heart struggling
against what is irremediable. Do not
look to find here what is not to be
found. Do not fancy that wiser and
luckier folks have found it, and that
you would have found it, too, but for
some unhappy mistake you made at a
critical turning in your life. The mis-
takes you have made, if you be an or-
dinary mortal living an ordinary life,
have not, in fact, done your life much
harm. You are making just about as
much of things in this world as it was
in you to make at all. Make the best
of the bargain you have made in this
or that. Doubtless you see it was not
a perfectly wise bargain. You would
not make it again. Had you been con-
siderably wiser than Solomon you
might never have made it at all. But
you are in for it now. Make the best
of things, in good nature and cheerfulness.
Do not mope and keep thinking,
thinking, how much better you might
have done, and, (like Mr. Bumble)
how cheap you went. So doing, you
will be making the very worst of
things. You will be deliberately black-
ening the sky under which you must
live if you are to live at all; you will
grow into a curse to yourself and a
nuisance to your neighbors. There is
plenty for you to do. Go and do it.
There are people a thousand times
worse off than you. Try and help
them. And for any sake, do not be al-
ways thinking about yourself. Get
away from that unsatisfactory subject
of contemplation. And be quite sure
that if you have told your special
friends about ten times each, how un-
happy you are and how many blunders
you have made, they are by this time
most uncommonly sick both of you and
them.
Being what you are it is quite certain
that if you had not done the foolish
things you did, you would have done
something else as bad or worse: You
married early, when you could not af-
ford it; you had some anxious years;
days have been when it seemed the
poor head was to go under water alto-
gether. Well, but it did not. You
have lived through these anxieties;
why recall them? You have got upon
firm ground. Be thankful. It is far
more and better than you deserve.
And the burden which lay on you so
heavily may have saved you from mak-
ing an inexpressible fool of yourself.
A man of sixty dangling after some
silly girl of twenty is an amazing and
humbling object of contemplation.
Even he suspects himself of being a
fool; everybody around knows it. Now
you, with your seven grown-up chil-
dren, and with your masterful wife,
are safe not to make a fool of yourself
in that particular way. Other ways
are open to you. But not one which
leads to manifestations quite so de-
plorable and contemptible. It is likely
enough you would advise a friend not
to make the turning you did. A man
who has a mother-in-law will generally
counsel any mortal man to marry an
orphan. But this comes of your know-
ing the evils you have, and being un-
aware of those which are waiting round
the corner, and from which no earthly
lot is free. You must take all things
here, your profession, your wife, your
house, horses, your servants, your na-
tive country with its climate, all your
environment, for better or worse. A
friend worries you by little weaknes-
ses, but he is better than no friend at
all. He may be likened to a gift of a
thousand dollars, subject to a deduc-
tion of two hundred and fifty. It is a

disadvantage about a locomotive en-
gine that it gets so hot. But you
must accept the engine under that ded-
uction. For it will not go unless it
be so hot. If you, being a human be-
ing living in this imperfect system of
things, will break away from every-
thing which has its inconveniences,
you will leave yourself without any
possession or surroundings whatever.
To speak gravely: One remarks in
these advancing years, that the great
anxiety and care of worthy men and
women, growing old, is about their
children; the lesser ones still going to
school; the bigger ones, for whom you
are seeking an aim in life, or who have
gone far away. No doubt, if you had
no children you would be free from
many anxious thoughts. The income
would go much farther. The furniture
and the painting of your house would
last much longer. You could indulge
in many luxuries now impossible. You
might buy books without stint and take
many delightful trips yearly. But you
would not have these selfish indulgen-
ces at the price. It is a cheerless
thing, a childless home. No one will
bear with you in the last fretfulness,
and smooth the last steps of your way,
like your own boy or girl. If there be
in you any good at all, it has been
brought out mainly by the continual
presence and charge of your children.
And you have had gleams of pure and
unselfish happiness, which are un-
known in a lonely life. Had you kept
clear of the responsibilities of life, and
given no hostages to fortune, you
would, do doubt, have presented a nar-
row mark to the shafts of care. But
unless you were a very poor creature
indeed, every time you heard the
laughter of little ones, and watched
their winsome ways, their thoughtless
merriment, you would have felt that
you had missed the best happiness of
this life. And to do that of your free
will is surely the greatest of all mis-
takes. Your library may be full of
beautifully bound volumes; your car-
pets unworn, your walls unmarked by
little fingers, no sudden noises may jar
your nerves; no eager little face look
in which you catch the germ of trouble
of a complicated sentence, and break the
tenor of your thoughts. And you never
yet saw the childish eyes close upon
this world; nor received the last kiss
from lips that were growing cold, when
Somebody as of old, "called to Himself
a little child." You never knew that
terrible trial, which no faith and no
hope could make anything other. But
neither did you ever see the bright
eyes lighted up when you return from
a brief absence, nor did little pattering
feet run to meet you. You never were
earnestly questioned as to what you
had brought; having earnestly consid-
ered the shop windows for something to
bring. You may have been told, but
you do not know as you might, that
these little creatures whether
abiding with you here or gone on be-
fore you, are the instruments of the
Best Hand to bring out the best that
can be made of His creatures here.
All that is worth having, even at what
it costs. A great deal has to be paid
for it, no doubt. But unless in morbid
and transient moods you would not
wish to have done without it.
Therefore, instead of moaning over
days past, with their opportunities
missed, and their idiotic sayings and
doings, we should all set ourselves to
do the best we can in the days which
yet remain. And if there be blots on
the page which can never be rubbed
out where we are, there is the supreme
consolation that some day we may
hope to turn over a new leaf, and make
a fresh start, far away.
In an article on the admission of wom-
en to the Cambridge College degrees,
Miss Helen Gladstone refers to the fact
that no less than six Cambridge colleges
were founded by women for the benefit
of men—Christ's and St. John's, by
Margaret, Countess of Richmond; Sid-
ney Sussex, by Lady Frances Sidney,
Countess of Sussex; Clair, by Elizabeth
de Burgh, Countess of Clare; Pembroke,
by Marie de St. Paul, Countess of Pem-
broke, and Queen, by Queen Margaret
of Anjou.
One part of the wedding ceremony
among the Babylonians was very sig-
nificant. The priest took a thread from
the garment of the bride, and another
from the garment of the bridegroom,
and tied them into a knot, which he
gave to the bride. This is probably the
origin of the modern saying about tying
the knot in regard to marriage.
At Wardbury, Norway, the longest
day lasts from May 21 to July 22, with-
out interruption.
Ostrich feathers frequently bring
\$350 per pound.